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Sen. Hardiman introduces bill to aid local nonprofits

LANSING — Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, today introduced legislation that would keep charitable nonprofit groups from paying property taxes, ensuring that organizations that are tax exempt maintain that status.

Hardiman introduced Senate Bill 1308 after becoming concerned that certain charitable nonprofit organizations that have been exempt from property taxes, some for more than 100 years, are being put on the tax rolls in some communities. The senator's legislation is not intended to expand tax-exemption laws but clarify that organizations that have been exempt remain that way as long as they maintain their mission and purpose.

“Charitable nonprofit organizations that have always been tax exempt should retain that status,” Hardiman said. “These groups serve some of our state’s most vulnerable people — many of whom are on fixed incomes — and adding these groups back onto tax rolls will only increase the living costs of those residents.”

In Grand Rapids, city officials have decided to start billing some charitable organizations for property taxes, including nonprofit homes for the aged and Hope Network, a local nonprofit that provides services to individuals with disabilities such as traumatic brain injury, stroke victims and autism.

The bill was referred to the Senate Finance Committee for consideration.

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